

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM, AND
ARCTIC POLICY

March 10, 2015
11:22 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Bob Herron, Chair
Representative Cathy Tilton
Representative Dan Ortiz
Representative Adam Wool

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Craig Johnson
Representative Charisse Millett
Representative Louise Stutes

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 5
Declaring 2015, 2016, and 2017 to be the Years of the Arctic;
encouraging the state and its partners to join the Institute of
the North; and encouraging the state to promote its Arctic
policy during the Years of the Arctic and to take action to
address the strategic recommendations in the Arctic Policy and
Implementation Plan of the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission.

- MOVED CSHCR 5(EDA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HCR 5

SHORT TITLE: DECLARE 2015-2017 AS YEARS OF THE ARCTIC

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) HERRON

02/20/15	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/20/15	(H)	EDA, FIN
03/10/15	(H)	EDA AT 11:15 AM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

ROB EARL, Staff
Representative Bob Herron
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Speaking on behalf of Representative Herron, sponsor, explained the changes in the proposed committee substitute for HCR 5, Version W.

DRUE PEARCE, Chairman
Board of Directors
Institute of the North
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HCR 5.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[11:22:40 AM](#)

CHAIR BOB HERRON called the House Special Committee on Economic Development, Tourism, and Arctic Policy meeting to order at 11:22 a.m. Representatives Tilton, Ortiz, Wool, and Herron were present at the call to order.

hb1

HCR 5-DECLARE 2015-2017 AS YEARS OF THE ARCTIC

[Contains discussion of HB 1]

[11:22:52 AM](#)

CHAIR HERRON announced that the only order of business would be HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 5, Declaring 2015, 2016, and 2017 to be the Years of the Arctic; encouraging the state and its partners to join the Institute of the North; and encouraging the state to promote its Arctic policy during the Years of the Arctic and to take action to address the strategic recommendations in the Arctic Policy and Implementation Plan of the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission.

[11:24:00 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HCR 5, labeled 29-LS0562\W, Nauman, 2/23/15, as the working draft.

[11:24:17 AM](#)

CHAIR HERRON objected for discussion purposes.

[11:24:27 AM](#)

ROB EARL, Staff, Representative Bob Herron, Alaska State Legislature, explained the changes to HCR 5 made in Version W. Mr. Earl said the original bill directed the legislature to "join" Institute of the North, which would have incurred cost; however, Version W directs the legislature to "join with" Institute of the North, and attached to the bill was a zero fiscal note, Identifier: HCR5-LEG-SESS-03-09-15.

[11:25:11 AM](#)

CHAIR HERRON clarified that there are no fees related to joining with Institute of the North.

[11:25:19 AM](#)

MR. EARL said no.

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON surmised the legislature would not become a member of Institute of the North. She noted that Institute of the North was very involved in the issues brought forth by the [Alaska Arctic Policy Commission Implementation Plan].

MR. EARL said correct.

[11:26:17 AM](#)

CHAIR HERRON removed his objection.

There being no further objection, Version W was before the committee.

[11:27:01 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON moved to adopt Amendment 1 which read:

Page 2, lines 20-21, after "state"
Delete: "to promote its Arctic policy"

Page 2, line 21, after "Arctic"
Delete: "and"

MR. EARL explained that Amendment 1 simply removes duplicative language.

There being no objection, Amendment 1 was adopted. There being no further objection, Version W was before the committee.

[11:27:50 AM](#)

CHAIR HERRON opened public testimony on HCR 5.

[11:28:03 AM](#)

DRUE PEARCE, Chairman, Board of Directors, Institute of the North, informed the committee she is a former member of the Alaska State Legislature and is providing testimony on behalf of Institute of the North ("Institute"). Ms. Pearce said the board of directors of the Institute believe that the years 2015 through 2017 should be "Years of the Arctic." This is especially appropriate in the U.S. because of the work of the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission (AAPC) and related proposed legislation, the U.S. chairmanship of the Arctic Council, and Governor Bill Walker's interest in rejoining the Northern Forum, which is an organization of the northernmost states, provinces, and territories. She advised that over the years 2015-2017, the Institute will hold monthly Arctic-related business forums, and during the upcoming Arctic Council events, the Institute is planning policy tours in hub communities such as Unalaska, Nome, and Kotzebue in order to update Alaskans on circumpolar affairs, and also to allow Alaskans to meet Arctic Council attendees. Ms. Pearce mentioned the upcoming Arctic Energy Summit, to be held in Fairbanks, which is associated with the Sustainable Development Working Group of the Arctic Council. She directed attention to the 2015-2017 "Years of the Arctic" calendar found in the committee packet, which included a partial list of upcoming Arctic events.

[11:32:11 AM](#)

CHAIR HERRON searched the calendar for the date of the October Arctic Council Senior Arctic Official (SAO) meeting in Anchorage.

MS. PEARCE said she did not know the date. She added that also missing from the calendar is a three-day Smithsonian Arctic Spring event scheduled for 5/8/15-5/10/15, at the Natural History Museum. Also, the U.S. Department of State is planning an event in May, and events are planned in Alaska as well to herald the U.S. chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

CHAIR HERRON asked Ms. Pearce to reflect on how some Congressional legislators view Alaska in a different way than do Alaskans.

11:34:19 AM

MS. PEARCE said her experience at U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski's recent Senate Energy hearing about the Arctic revealed different attitudes toward development in the Arctic, and the economic survival of Alaskans. Two Congressional legislators stated there was irony in that leaders from Alaska stressed the importance of economic development for jobs in villages, regional hubs, and cities; in fact, two members of the minority questioned why Alaskans would be advocating for onshore and offshore development in Alaska, at the same time some Alaska communities are seeing the impacts from climate change, or from storms, resulting in erosion. She recalled that at the hearing, Chair Herron made a strong statement that indigenous Alaskans have been dealing with change for 10,000 years or more, and will continue to adapt to change; however, for a strong economy and food security, the economic development of resources is necessary. Ms. Pearce said Senator Lisa Murkowski pointed out that members of the Senate from other states discount the development in their states, and wish "to turn Alaska into a pristine wilderness where we are not able to develop our resources." She cautioned that the focus on climate change in the Arctic could be difficult for Alaska because of the presumption that development in the Arctic will lead to more climate change. Ms. Pearce stressed the importance to articulate the foresight the legislature had in setting statutory goals for renewable energy in Alaska, although the use of renewables will not negate the need for hydrocarbons overnight.

11:39:42 AM

CHAIR HERRON after ascertaining that no one else wished to testify, closed public testimony on HCR 5.

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON acknowledged that HCR 5 does not address the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); however, language in support of UNCLOS is contained in the AAPC Implementation Plan which is promoted in HCR 5. On pages 4 and 5 of the draft AAPC Implementation Plan, there is a reference to legislation under consideration in the 29th Alaska State Legislature, and she expressed her strong opposition to the inclusion of the language regarding UNCLOS; in fact, this is relevant to the bill title and to language in the bill on page 2, lines 20-23, which read:

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature encourages the state to promote its Arctic policy during the Years of the Arctic and to take action to address the strategic recommendations in the Arctic Policy and Implementation Plan of the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission.

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON relayed that her constituents have contacted her and she finds this "troubling language."

CHAIR HERRON read from the AAPC Implementation Plan on page 5 as follows:

The Alaska Arctic Policy Commission submits to the Legislature for consideration this language for an Alaska Arctic Policy bill. It is possible that through the legislative process changes will be made.

CHAIR HERRON pointed out that the foregoing was draft language and the reference to UNCLOS in HB 1 has been removed.

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON stated she wanted her opposition on the record.

REPRESENTATIVE ORTIZ asked for verification that the reference to UNCLOS has been withdrawn.

CHAIR HERRON pointed out that the language is in the draft implementation plan document delivered on 1/30/15; however, HB 1 was amended by the Senate and the reference to UNCLOS was removed.

[11:42:47 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WOOL recalled hearing from another Institute board member, Dr. Mike Sfraga, that the reference to UNCLOS was very important. This view was also heard from a constituent who is an Arctic researcher. Representative Wool related that the researcher said other countries are "staking out their territory," Japan specifically, and advised it is important to be part of UNCLOS.

CHAIR HERRON observed that UNCLOS is before the U.S. Senate, and regardless of UNCLOS, HCR 5 advocates that the Arctic is very important to Alaska. Therefore, the intent of the bill is to join with the Institute to ensure that the Arctic is promoted during the term of the Arctic Council chairmanship, when those

who affect circumpolar Arctic policies will be visitors to Alaska. Chair Herron stressed that the legislature makes policy and the executive branch executes policy, thus the legislature should have as much effect on Arctic decisions as possible.

REPRESENTATIVE WOOL asked Chair Herron for his opinion on whether not being a party to UNCLOS hinders the ability of the U.S. to advocate for its interests in the Arctic region.

CHAIR HERRON opined no, because nearly all of the provisions are in place, except for the United Nations mining law provision; in fact, former President Ronald Reagan endorsed UNCLOS after some changes were made. He said UNCLOS is important, and he expressed his belief that there will be a change in opinion at a future time.

[11:47:07 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON moved to report CSHCR 5, Version 29-LS0562\W, Nauman, 2/23/15, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying zero fiscal note. There being no objection, CSHCR 5(EDA) was reported out of the House Special Committee on Economic Development, Tourism, and Arctic Policy.

[11:47:41 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Economic Development, Tourism, and Arctic Policy meeting was adjourned at 11:47 a.m.